

University Heights Messenger

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GOSPEL PLAN OF SALVATION

- Hear the gospel (Romans 10:17)
- Believe Jesus is the Christ (John 3:16)
- Repent from sins (Luke 13:3)
- Confess faith in Jesus (Romans 10:9-10)
- Be baptized for remission of sins (Acts 2:38)
- Live worthy of the calling (Ephesians 4:1)

IN NEED OF PRAYERS

Recent Additions:

Edith Tirey has gone on to her reward. Let us pray for Ron and his family as they mourn the loss of his mother. **Charlie Little**, a friend of Janett Brundige, has passed away. **Chase Hamilton** (nephew of one of Terry's coworkers) is battling leukemia. His health is very fragile right now.

List:

Our members: Jeff Howerton, Glenn Kimberlin, Paul Atkisson, Julie and the babies, Arlena Poynter, Roberta Morelan

Others: Lenny Shepperson, Jan Hogen, Barabara Matheny, David Morrow, Debbie Parker, Rita Pagan, Vina Krassow, Courtney and Aubrey Reeves, John Bennett, Robert and Sarah Brundige, Donald Dawson, Jean Gartland, Gail Stein, Dawn Rutledge, Sandy Childress, Mary Wilson, Doris Baker, Bill Childress, Susie Burton, Fred Dalton, Norma Hurt, Taylor Osterling

<u>WEEKLY READING</u>	<u>LEADERSHIP</u>		<u>SERVICES</u>
Sun: Ps 62, 2 Sm 22:1-23:7, Ez 23, Lk 23:26-56	<u>ELDERS</u>	<u>DEACONS</u>	<u>Sunday</u>
Mon: Ps 63, 2 Sm 23:8-39, Ez 24, Lk 24	Garry Banks	Troy Antle	Bible Study: 9:45 AM
Tue: Ps 64, 2 Sm 24, Ez 25, Ro 1:1-17	David Collins	Richard Brundige	Worship: 10:45 AM; 6:00 PM
Wed: Ps 65, 1 Kg 1:1-27, Ez 26, Ro 1:18-32	John Thompson	Neal Erickson	<u>Wednesday</u>
Thu: Ps 66, 1 Kg 1:28-53, Ez 27, Ro 2:1-16		Adam Litmer	Bible Study: 7:30 PM
Fri: Ps 67, 1 Kg 2, Ez 28, Ro 2:17-3:8	<u>EVANGELIST</u>	Bill Morelan	<u>1st Fri. of Month</u>
Sat: Ps 68, 1 Kg 3, Ez 29-30, Ro 3:9-20	Adam Litmer	Jim Parsons	Singing: 7:30 PM
		Pat Seabolt	<u>3rd Fri. of Month</u>
		Matt Thompson	Bible Study: 7:00 PM
			(Ask for location)

We...Do Covenant Together

A couple of weeks ago I had the opportunity to preach eight sermons to the brethren of the Bethel Church of Christ in Lincoln County. Having some familiarity with the area I was aware that the congregation there had existed for quite some time. A few of the members, now in their 70's-80's, have been around that congregation their entire lives so they knew that it was at least more than 85 years old. It turns out that it is much older than that. However, a very interesting bit of information is that the congregation "reorganized" in 1918.

"I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name."
Revelation 3:8b

The following document is copied from the original record book of the Bethel church, which I feel blessed to have been able to hold in my hands. It is a piece of restoration history that continues to speak to you and I today. This is what was written exactly the way it was written, punctuation and all:

"The Church of Christ at Bethel reorganized May the 18, 1918. We the Disciples of Christ at Bethel Church of Lincoln County, State of Ky, do covenant together to keep house for the Lord. And accept as our rule of life the teachings of the old and new Testament scriptures and to accept nothing more or nothing less than what they teach, to the exclusion of all human creeds and doctrines of men, which cause strife and divisions, rather than Godly edification." The five elders and three deacons, one of whom served as the church treasurer, signed the document.

We can draw a few important things from this magnificent document. First, the brethren at Bethel came to a realization that so

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many congregations had been coming to for about a 65-70 year span by 1918—it was time to discard human creeds and hold fast to the Scriptures as the only “rule of life.” The brethren came to understand that 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Corinthians 4:6; 2 Peter 1:3, etc, serve to teach us that there is nothing outside of the holy Scriptures that can make a spiritual person complete and equipped for every good work.

Secondly, the brethren at Bethel in 1918 recognized that to hold to human creeds and doctrines of men can do nothing but “cause strife and division, rather than Godly edification.” How serious a matter is maintaining doctrinal purity by holding fast to God’s revealed will? Take a moment to read Titus 1:10-11 and 2 John 9-11 to see the command for elders to “silence” the mouth of false teachers and for all Christians to avoid welcoming those who do not abide in the teaching of Christ. When folks choose to leave God’s Word behind to invent creeds and doctrines it is certain that they will not agree among themselves about what new things to invent. Strife and division will only increase the further one walks away from God’s Word. The brethren at Bethel came to realize this and made necessary changes.

Thirdly, we see that though they were certainly on the right track, they still had a little work to do. Students of restoration history will have noted that they referred to themselves as the “Disciples of Christ.” This tells us that they were heavily influenced by the teaching and ideas of Alexander Campbell whose preference was for the Lord’s church to call itself the “Disciples of Christ.” While we are certainly disciples of our Lord, the *church* was never given such a designation in the Scriptures. There are many scriptural designations for the church, “church of Christ” being one of them (Romans 16:16). At some point the Bethel church dropped the “Disciples of Christ” name and adopted exclusively one of the biblical designations, “church of Christ.”

Ninety-six years after this document was drafted, and sixty-one years after the last elder to have signed it passed from this life (1951), the church at Bethel is still holding fast to God’s Word. They are quite small. Lincoln County is not a place awash in employment opportunities.

Their children must go elsewhere for higher education and work. These days farming rarely provides compensation suitable to support a family unless that family is able to draw income from another source such as a pension or Social Security. Thus, few move into the area unless they are returning to the home of their youth after many decades elsewhere.

Even so, there is a light shining in Lincoln County. There is a beacon of truth in that community. Our brethren at Bethel have but little power and yet they have kept the Lord’s word and have refused to deny His name (Revelation 3:8). I find them to be a tremendous encouragement.

I was thrilled to receive a letter in the mail from Clara Proctor, one of the dear sisters at Bethel, about a week after my meeting with them concluded. Sister Clara is in possession of the original record book and our visit revived her interest in the history of the church. Contained in her letter was some information that I never knew. In the 1940’s (she didn’t tell me the exact date) there is a note that Bonny and Rosemary Arney were baptized and accepted as members. Why did such news thrill me? Because Bonny was my grandmother and Rosemary is my aunt.

No, Bethel is not a large congregation and never really has been. Yet I cannot help but wonder at the number of faithful Christians in congregations all across this country who first learned the gospel truth at that congregation and even now hold a special place in their heart for that little group in Lincoln County still shining forth the gospel light and teaching the truth their forefathers accepted with great rejoicing in 1918. Praise God for those churches that stay strong and zealous for Him, even when they possess but little strength! AL

Sermons: (AM) A Christian Every Day (PM) Adam Daniel’s will preach